AP US History

Chapter 6 Questions

1) What is Federalism and how is the Constitution designed to make it work with regard to state sovereignty, centralization of powers, and balance of powers?

Federalism is the distribution of power in an organization (as a government) between a central authority and the constituent units. The Constitution has a distinctive feature- that is resolving the problem of sovereignty they had, they decided to saw that all power at all levels of government came from the people. The Constitution’s real feature was its distribution of powers between the national and state governments. The federal government was to have the powers to tax, regulate commerce, control the currency, and to pass laws. The states get any power not mentioned by the Constitution. Also it solved the problem about concentrated authority. It solved the problem with “checks and balances” where the three legislatives could make sure that the other was doing their job/violating the Constitution.

2) What was Alexander Hamilton’s political philosophy and what were recommendations and plans as Secretary of Treasury (use p. 168, 169 AND 170)?

Hamilton’s political philosophy was that a stable and effective government required an enlightened ruling class. So his plan (or the government’s) was to receive the support of the wealthy and powerful; to get it, he needed to give them a stake in its success. He proposed that the government should take responsibility of the existing public debt, and to pay the war bonds and make new ones. His plans were not to pay off and eliminate the debt, but to create a large and permanent national debt with new bonds, and keep up the price of government bonds through old ones were paid off. He thought that the creditors will lend money to the government and would have a permanent stake in seeing the government survive. He also wanted a national bank that would help fill the void that the absence of a well-developed banking system had created. It would provide loans and currency to businesses, give the government a safe place to deposit federal funds, collect taxes, disburse the government’s expenditures, etc. He also proposed two new kinds of taxes, one of alcoholic liquors, and a tariff on imports. In the end most of his plans had worked and the effects were the same as he envisioned.

3) Describe the demographics of the Founding Fathers and the major differences in opinion and perspective that they embodied.

The fathers were male, well-educated, around their 40s, and represented the best interest of the country, property owning, mostly Christian. Well they came from most of the states where they at the PA convention, decided to what the government was going to be. There were two main sides, those with either the VA plan or the NJ plan. Basically the VA plan had a national legislature, one house, lower had representation depending on population size, upper were elected by lower, basically made larger states happier. On the other hand, the NJ had a legislative with one house, gave Congress additional powers than VA plan, but in house, each state had equal representation, basically made small states happier. Those were the major differences in what they wanted/thought would be best, the effect was nothing was done, only bickering until they made a compromise which were the perspectives (plans) combined into one, the Great Compromise. There were some issues over slavery, perspectives on farming v. commerce, etc.

4) How did the new American government deal with securing the frontier and Native Americans?

During the Confederation Congress they had failed to tie the outlying western areas of the country firmly to the government, but managed to in the end. To do this there was a rebellion about the whiskey tax, the federal government won the allegiance of the whiskey rebels by intimidating them, and it won the loyalties of other frontier people by accepting their territories as new states in the Union. There was still the Indians’ challenge of the republic (US)’s claim of the Northwest and Southwest. The ordinances of 1784-1787 produced a lot of border conflicts with Indian tribes and westward settlers. So in the Constitution, it gave Congress the power to regulate foreign bodies, but specifically here, the Indians. Article VI bound the new government to respect treaties negotiated by the Confederation, most of which were with the Indians. The Indians received no direct representation in the new government, so the effect was that the relationship between the tribes and the US remained to be determined by a series of treaties, agreements, and judicial decisions in a process that has continued for two centuries.

5) What did Jay’s Treaty and Pinckney’s Treaty show about the new American government?

Brief summary: Jay’s Treaty was with the British, whose main effect was the prevention of America becoming involved with the war with France, Pinckney’s Treaty was with the Spanish, whose main effect was the right to move more freely in some Spanish lands in the US. Basically it showed that the new American government was doing really well, since they had managed to make a treaty with Great Britain whose feelings about the American Revolution hasn’t changed much, also it showed that the government had (did have) power to regulate commerce with foreign nations and that America really is a nation of its own. The other treaty revealed that they did have the power to regulate the Indians, since the treaty with Spanish allowed America to receive protection from Indians in Florida from launching raids across the border under Spanish authorities, also revealed that they had power to increase/decrease their boundary and America’s recognition to their land. New government were asserting itself in the treaties, showed competence, self-defensive (protects self-interest), etc.

6) What were the results of the XYZ affair? How did the XYZ Affair lead to the Alien and Sedition Acts and how did the Alien and Sedition Acts lead to the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions? What did all of this show about America at the time?

Well it caused a widespread popular outrage at France’s actions and strong support for the Federalists’ response. The result led to a quasi-war with France (also undeclared) ironically where the French helped the Americas with their revolution, but now America turned its back and sided with the British fighting them. It was short-lived though, a treaty was made with the new French government Napoleon Bonaparte ending the war. This led to the Alien and Sedition Acts by increasing the majorities of Federalists in Congress (1798) where the Alien act gave power of dealing with foreigners to the president and the Sedition act where any sedition against the government led to prosecution. Those acts led to the Republican leaders to the VA and KY resolutions because those acts contradicted John Locke’s saying about the people and government where the Republicans gained power nearly or already now rivaling that of the Federalists’ for a national crisis. This showed that America was now in a national crisis and it was politically split; state legislatures were like battlegrounds, US Congress was plagued with violent disagreements.

7) How did the Election of 1800 test the stability of the American political process and why are its results labeled the “Revolution of 1800?”

Easy, the bitter controversies shaped the 1800 presidential elections. It was really unstable, a lot of slander was going on, so if the election occurred than it was stable enough to continue (government survival); also one of the ugliest elections in American history, TJ won. It could be called the Revolution of 1800 because in the first time in political history in America, two people from the same party were against each other for the same position (here: President), the two had no majority at all, equally tied, so the Federalist Congress had to convene to decide who won. (Real reason of revolution) It was a major shift in power, because the Federalist lost the power and a new party had risen up as the new government.